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SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI : I know that the Speaker has a right to extend the time-limit. But the understanding arrived at in Ootacamund was that if within a month the reply was not received, it should be included in the list of questions for a day. This matter was discussed at Ootacamund and the above was the understanding arrived at. Otherwise it would lead to undue delay.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : I shall read from what happened at the Rules Committee meeting held at Ootacamund.

"Sri T. S. Ramaswami moved that the second proviso of rule 34 be deleted. Explaining the object of his amendment he stated that there was enormous delay in the members' getting replies for important questions. If the proviso was omitted, all questions pending with the departments for more than 14 days would have to be automatically included in the list of questions for a day. The Hon. Sri C. Subramaniam pointed out that there was no delay on the part of the Secretariat Departments. When they had to collect information from the Heads of Departments and other officers in the districts, it took some time. If they agreed to delete the proviso, as suggested by Sri T. S. Ramaswami, it would not improve matters. Because, when they had not received full information from the departments, they would have to send a reply to the Legislature Department to the effect 'The information asked for by the hon. Member is being collected.' If that answer could satisfy the members, he had no objection to accepting the amendment suggested by Sri T. S. Ramaswami. He suggested that the Speaker might extend the time by one week in in the first instance and that if the departments wanted further extension the Speaker might give another weeks' time. The Speaker said that the Hon. Minister's suggestion would be kept in mind. Sri T. S. Ramaswami then did not press his amendment."

SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI : How far has the Hon. Minister's suggestion been kept up, I would like to know.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : As far as possible.

III.—ADJOURNMENT MOTION *re* CUT IN SUGAR PRODUCTION.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : I have received notice of an adjournment motion from the hon. Member Sri A. Govindasamy to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, viz., ten per cent cut in sugar production on account of which sugar producers and sugarcane growers have been affected much.

I would like to inform the hon. Member that a statement was made by the Hon. Minister yesterday and further that the hon. Member has got an opportunity to discuss this matter during the ensuing discussion on the budget. So I do not give my consent to the hon. Member to raise this adjournment motion.

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SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI : On a point of order, Sir. I am afraid that the consent of the House is necessary to proceed to the next item.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : As soon as the questions are over, we can proceed to the next item.

SRI T. S. RAMASWAMI : Rule 22 of the Assembly Rules states that the first hour of every sitting shall, unless the House unanimously resolves otherwise, be available for the asking and answering of questions. So, the consent of the House is necessary if we want to proceed with any other item within the first one hour allotted for questions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : Unless we want to take away the question-hour completely and allot it to some other business, permission of the House under Rule 22 is not necessary.

IV.—CALLING ATTENTION TO THE RETRENCHMENT OF WORKERS IN THE MUKKAMPALA ESTATE.

SRI V. K. KOTHANDARAMAN : கனம் உதவி சபாநாயகர் அவர்களே, கன்யாகுமரி ஜில்லாவிலுள்ள முக்கம்பலா எஸ்டேட்டில், இப்பொழுது அதற்குப் பெயர் பெத்தானி எஸ்டேட், வேலை செய்யக்கூடிய சுமார் 126 தொழிலாளர்கள் வேலையிலிருந்து நீக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். அப்படி அவர்கள் வேலையிலிருந்து நீக்கப்பட்டதுடன் அவர்கள் அவர்களுடைய குடியிருப்பிலிருந்தும் கூட வெளியேற்றப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள். அதனால் அந்தத் தொழிலாளர்கள் ரொம்பவும் துன்பத்திற்குள்ளாகி இருக்கிறார்கள். அந்தத் தொழிலாளர்களுக்கு ஏற்பட்டுள்ள துன்பங்களையும் இன்னல்களையும் எடுத்துரைப்பது ரொம்பவும் முக்கியத்துவம் வாய்ந்ததாக இருக்கக்கூடிய விஷயமாக இருக்கிறது என்பதை கனம் உள்துறை அமைச்சர் அவர்களுடைய கவனத்திற்குக் கொண்டுவர விரும்புகிறேன்.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Mukkampala Estate was owned by the Midland Rubber and Produce Company, Limited, Allepey. One hundred and twenty-six workers were working in the estate. On 29th August 1961, the Superintendent of the Mukkampala Estate gave notice stating that they had decided to retrench the workers with effect from 31st August 1961, after paying the notice-pay, etc., stipulated under the Industrial Disputes Act, as they had decided to sell Mukkampala Estate on and from 1st September 1961. Accordingly, the management paid notice-pay, compensation, etc., to the 126 workers on 31st August 1961 in full and final settlement and terminated their services. From 1st September to 6th September 1961 there